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ABSTRACT

Responses to national reports during October 1984 through May 1985 concerning the state of American higher education are analyzed. Quantitative content analysis and qualitative rehetorical criticism are used to examine responses to national reports. Three national reports are of concern: "Involvement in Learning," "A Nation at Risk," and "Integrity in the College Curriculum." To analyze the progress of propaganda in print media, attention is directed to: (1) the language used to describe the three major reports; (2) the character of assertions made in the media about the major actors, issues, and beliefs that comprise the competing myths; and (3) the rhetoric of response over time. Six categories of assertions for analysis of newspaper content and propaganda are identified, along with rules used to select communications and assertions within them. Consideration is given to: the role and emotive position of faculty in the drama of propaganda changes over time; and attributions of curriculum over time. To illustrate the drama of rhetoric, attention is focused to: negation and denial, purposive misconstruction, ethical judgment and reconstruction, aesthetic judgment and acceptance, and action. Appendices include content analysis guidelines and information on the types of news sources. (SW)

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WAR AND PEACE AMONG THE WORDS:

Rhetoric, Style and Propaganda in Response to National Reports

on Higher Education

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On Easter Sunday, 1609, a sermon no less remarkable for our purposes than for his was preached before King James at Whitehall by the Bishop of Winchester, one Lancelot Andrewes. The good Bishop's text was as appropriate for its particular day as the tenor of his interpretation is for ours. The ancient text is from John, xx.19, known to clerics by its shorthand, "the Pax Vobis." (1) The portion of Andrewes' commentary which attracts the modern sensibility, and which, in our very catholic reading, has little to do with doctrine, is as follows:

> . . .Pax Vobis. The words are but two, yet even between them there seemeth to be no peace, but one in a manner opposite the other. Looking to vobis, the persons, this should not be a salutation for them, pax. Looking to the salutation, "peace," it should not be to those persons, vobis, "to you." So that our first work will be, to make peace between the two words. (2)

This paper is about making peace among words. It is about the drama of a discourse no less public in our time than a sermon before the Court of King James nearly 400 years ago. It is about cadences of symbolic performance as Senecan as the style of Andrewes' prose. While

it may have been a standard conceit of 17th Century Divines to make peace among words, and while the tradition of doing so may be inseparable from the ecclesiastical profession (regardless of Persuasion), the essential wisdom of the exercise should not escape us: these are public words, and public words are both precious and powerful.

The public words before us, the words among which we must make the peace that comes with understanding, are those that have been written before the court of national opinion over the past year in response to three major reports concerning the state of American higher education that were published by national bodies. These words form a body of "literature" that, in its cadences and rhetoric, both reflects and creates a drama and a "way of life." (3) The language, the cadence, the rhetoric, and the drama, I hold, set the conditions under which action to improve higher education takes place, and are thus worth very serious attention and analysis.

Why engage in this investigation? Because the belief system of American higher education holds dear the causal notion that if only a problem can be raised and forcefully described before an audience of key players, the problem will be addressed and ultimately resolved. If that is the case, one should consider both the degree of "force" in the description and the ways in which the audience responds to the description. At the same time, this optimistic positivism realizes both the limitations of our institutions to act and the constraints of time. That is, while we believe actions are possible, we know that institutions are slow to act, and that the more complex the institutions, the

less actions are cumulative and reinforcing. If that is the case, one should consider the ways in which the language of response evolves over time and should try to identify the critical points in this evolution in order to determine when and where action is most likely to occur.

Notice that I have used the word, "action," in describing our belief system. I did not use the word, "change." In one sense, I err, because change, and not mere action, is what lies at the core of our canon of beliefs. And yet, and I hope to demonstrate, that belief itself is erroneous because we have been thinking about "change" in limited ways.

To consider the ways in which the response to national reports evolves, this paper relies on a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative rhetorical criticism, both of which draw on fundamental ideas of semiotics. The yoking of these methods is a form of exposition I have striven to realize in previous work, but never as consciously as here. More than a form of exposition, the method implicitly underscores an intellectual substrate of both the humanities and the social sciences: the drive to create "representative" or "characteristic" signs. The difference between the two disciplinary traditions, Kenneth Burke points out, lies in the degree of formality of that drive. Humanists, Burke notes, engage in "informal fact-gathering" and reach de facto "statistical conclusions." (4) It does no violence to the common sense of Burke's observation to perform a formal statistical analysis as a prolegomena to an informal one.

Harold Lasswell, whose pioneering work on propaganda a half century ago inspired the formal quantitative analysis, once noted that despite our recognition of the practical effects of language, whether "power, pain or composure of mind," we have a tendency to resist quantitative appraisals of its public uses. (5) Yet language used with the intent of influencing decisions and choices is a language of power. "It is," as he wrote, "battle cry, verdict and sentence, statute, ordinance and rule, oath of office, controversial news, comment and debate." (6)

Given the magical power of this use of language, given the broad effects it is intended to have, given the myriad of media that convey the myriad of utterances functioning to influence decisions, Lasswell and his associates (7) refined and applied the methods of content analysis to determine what was "representative." What content analysis as a method accomplishes is not much different from what Burke asserts an artist does informally to arrive at the "representative," the "characteristic," the "symbolic." But the quantitative method does something more in that it enables us to trace the diffusion of ideas, myths, doctrines and attitudes through public language use, and hence, the potential for decisions and change. That is why I find the method particularly valuable and appropriate for this investigation.

THE ARGUMENT

The argument that leads to the content analysis is a bit knotty. I do not wish to belabor the obvious, but one must take care to map such routes. If that mapping generates a bit of redundancy, so be it. I

would rather be redundant than lost:

- The public use of language refers not only to linguistic signs but also to non-verbal acts that are intended to be "read" the same way. This is what Charles Morris calls the "pragmatic" dimension of semiosis." (8)

- Patterns of language use and non-verbal behaviors are "performances," the meaning of which lies in convention, not in ostensible definitions. (9) When the complex of these uses is played out on a public stage, the potential for a drama of symbolic action is established.

- When this drama is played with a purpose, where persuasion is the goal, we judge its success by its effects. Broadly speaking, the drama becomes a rhetoric. Rhetoric, as Morris noted, "may be regarded as an early and restricted form of pragmatics," (10) but now, he observed, "newspaper statements, political creeds, and philosophical systems are increasingly being looked at in terms of the interests which are expressed and served by the production and use of the signs in question." (11)

- There is no public drama without the mass media. The media themselves interpret the issues raised in the drama: directly, through editorial opinion, and indirectly, by selection of topics, illustrations, experts to interview and quote, letters-to-the-editor, diction, and epithet.

o Thus, what appears to be exposition is often rhetorical. I. A. Richards has noted that while persuasion "is only one among the aims of discourse," it tends to "poach" on the others, especially on exposition. (12)

o To the extent to which the selections of the mass media are repeated we perceive the elements of the drama as "representative" or "symbolic," or, in Kenneth Burke's phrase, "individuations of a common paradigm." Nothing is representative or symbolic unless statistically so, unless there are enough "individuations" for us to see "a common paradigm." In fact, Burke suggests substituting the word "statistical" for "symbolic" in the phrase, "symbolic action." (13)

o The constant public repetition of assertions about key elements in a drama of persuasion that is also of sufficient duration constitutes propaganda.

o When this propaganda has been sufficiently diffused, provoking the participation of key target audiences, we can conclude that its principal messages have been accepted.

In 1984, the higher education community in the United States was forced to enter a national discussion that challenged some of its most basic beliefs and myths concerning the quality of its processes and outcomes. Emerging slowly and indirectly in the preceding years, that questioning formed a stage of what we are describing that, in democratic

societies, the French social theorist, Jacques Ellul, has called "pre-propaganda":

> . . . direct propaganda, aimed at modifying opinions and attitudes, must be preceded by propaganda that is sociological in character, slow, general, seeking to create a climate, an atmosphere of favorable preliminary attitudes. No direct propaganda can be effective without pre-propaganda, which, without direct or noticeable aggression, is limited to creating ambiguities, reducing prejudices, and spreading images, apparently without purpose. (14)

When, at the beginning of the work of the Study Group that wrote Involvement in Learning, Harold Hodgkinson observed that no report intended to play a role on a national stage would be effective "unless a tide was already rising," he offered, in a simple figure, the complex notion that lies at the core of Ellul's theory. Indeed, I think one could demonstrate that sociological propaganda, conveying a profound dissatisfaction with American education, had been building for five or six years before A Nation at Risk was issued, and that, after that pivotal event, the national stage was open for statements which reinforced the rising myths and symbols of a new belief system in American education.

A NECESSARY WORD ON PROPAGANDA

Because we associate propaganda with totalitarian regimes, we tend to think of it as intrinsically evil. As Lasswell and others have demonstrated, however, there are different kinds of "propaganda," some of which are used almost exclusively in democratic societies. These more "democratic" uses of propaganda tend to be overt, involve direct incitement, openly admit their aims (e.g. "Yes, I am trying to persuade you to . . . ."), and often utilize education. (15) Ellul and Lasswell

differ concerning the role of education in the potential success of propaganda in democratic societies: both see a strong role for education, but for very different reasons. In his taxonomy of propagandas (16), Ellul places considerable emphasis on what he calls "integration propaganda," that is, the mass public persuasion necessary to help individuals adapt to change, and a persuasion that takes place largely through education. Lasswell, on the other hand, believed that education was the best defense against propaganda of all kinds, but particularly that of totalitarian regimes.

It is easier to side with Ellul's more complex notions about propaganda in democratic societies if one accepts as a premise that modern propaganda is no longer so much about changing people's ideas or beliefs "but to provoke action." (17) In a democratic society, he says,

> propaganda . . . aims solely at <u>participation</u>. The participation may be active or passive: active, if propaganda has been able to mobilize the individual for action; passive, if the individual does not act directly but psychologically supports that action.(18)

Propaganda in democratic societies is thus no mere "public relations." Rather, it is a raggedy, decentralized but oddly systematic way of creating the conditions under which given groups will act for a specific set of ends/goals or passively support the action of others. Intellectuals (and academics in particular) who value the "objectivity" of considering all sides of an issue stripped of its rhetorical wrappings, think they are immune to this raggedy action. Paradoxically, as Ellul points out, intellectuals in democratic societies are the <u>most</u> vulnerable to propaganda:

> The reader of a number of newspapers expressing diverse attitudes --just because he is better informed--is more subjected than anyone else to a propaganda that he cannot perceive, even though he claims to retain free choice in the mastery of all this information. (19)

Thus, when the reports on the quality of American higher education emerged, the academics who thought they were insulated from anything that resembled propaganda were among the most active players in the drama that ensued. As Ellul defines modern propaganda, they became "participants." Over a period of time, they had been "educated," so to speak, to associate certain judgments with certain words or signs. They were ready to leap into a clash of competing mythologies, and leap they did.

Recall: there were not three reports; there were dozens. Starting in 1982, there were state-level reports in Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Nebraska, and elsewhere. There were professional association and special interest group reports concerning teacher education, minority issues, adult education, business education, and community college education. The Southern Regional Education Board issued a report; and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching set in motion a series of reports to be published starting in 1985. All of these, let alone the responses to them, were the products of academic or quasi-academic bodies trying to influence the course of change. We were all, in fact, engaging in propaganda, though hardly the total program characteristic of societies and states whose very existence depends upon direct propaganda.

SLOUCHING TOWARD CONTENT ANALYSIS

As we have noted, propaganda in democratic societies must be continuous in order to be effective. While that may also be true in totalitarian states, it is more so in democracies where there are competing belief systems and competing myths. The drama of response to the three reports at issue well illustrates that competition. True to the methods of propaganda, the reports themselves--Involvement in Learning, To Reclaim a Legacy, and Integrity in the College Curriculum --were recreating a social myth. A social myth, as Ellul describes it, is

> a sort of vision of desirable objectives that have lost their material, practical character and have become strongly colored, over-whelming [sic], all-encompassing, and which displace from the conscious all that is not related to it. (20)

And what is the social myth of these three reports? It is the true, the good and the beautiful of liberal education. It is the true, the good and the beautiful of higher standards of learning and assessment. In some formulations, it is even the true, the good and the beautiful of the active and involved student. Ultimately, this myth holds that it is possible to actualize these truths.

The contest between this myth and its competitions, and the comparative strengths of those forces over time, are best observable in the press. In an age of electronic media, one may question my use of printed documents, particularly newspapers, to provide statistical verification of propaganda. But the readership is both ripe for indoctrination and capable of a modicum--but no more--of reflection. Why? Readers of newspapers are analogous to what Ellul called "the man

of current events," swept along on a sea of information, living on the surface of that sea, having few reference points and fewer sheltered harbors in which to lay over for a while in thought. But television offers no harbors whatsoever, and harbors--particularly in the form of feature articles or op-ed pieces that break away from the surface events--are necessary for the group that must "participate" in order for the propaganda to succeed. Academic culture is a culture of print, and takes its vitality from the written word. The written word allows explanation and reflection--key academic values--and not merely fact or doctrine. Hence the print media are the best vehicles for our propaganda.

To construct the map of the progress of propaganda, we must thus look to the print media and analyze: (a) the language used to describe the three major reports, (b) the character of assertions made in the media about the major sets of actors, issues and beliefs that comprise the competing myths, and (c) the rhetoric of response over time. In order to demonstrate what is more "representative" or "symbolic" in printed communications concerning the three reports, content analysis suggests itself as the most promising method.

What is "content analysis"? Allow me to translate from some of the notable definitions. (21) It is a technique for classifying signs that appear in communications of various kinds into a set of categories. The classification is carried out by an observer or group of observers on the basis of explicit rules; and the categories established by these (or other) analysts must be appropriate to the subject. The results "state

the frequency of occurrence of signs for each category in the classification scheme." (22)

Lasswell claimed that content analysis is appropriate for testing three types of hypotheses. First, hypotheses concerning the relationship between the communicator and the characteristics of his/her communication. For example, I might have taken all the responses to the reports written by students, and offered a series of interpretations of the relationship between student judgments and the generic position, intentions and values of students. It may be considered a fault of this study that I did not engage in such analyses, but, to use the statistician's jargon, the "Ns" were insufficient. Nonetheless, in those cases where the data are sufficient, the reader will note occasional comments on the relationship between types of assertions and the role of communicators.

The second type of hypothesis subject to content analysis concerns relationships between the signs that occur in these communications and the reactions of audiences. To test this type of hypothesis, of course, would involve both an identification of audiences and additional methods for measuring their responses to particular signs. Clearly, that type of study lies beyond the scope of this paper (though it turns up obliquely in my account of the rhetorical responses to the reports). And thirdly, content analysis can test hypotheses concerning relationships between types of signs in the communications. It is in this third field that this study seeks to generate hypotheses inductively.

There are a number of kinds of content analysis (23), and I use three. In ascending order of frequency and importance they are:

(1) "Attributions analysis," which, as Irving Janis defined it, "indicates the frequency with which certain characterizations are referred to." (24) For example, we might be interested in how often each of the three reports is characterized as "timely" versus how often it is judged "out-of-date." The weight of the evidence may indicate the receptiveness of the respondents to particular proposals for reform advanced by a report.

(2) "Designations analysis," which simply records the frequency with which certain objects (persons, things, groups, concepts, events) are referred to. Lasswell uses the analogue of "subject-matter analysis" to describe what is at issue here. I claim that the identification of subject matter by respondents focuses the drama of competing myths so as to preclude some solutions and to advance others. The frequency of designations, in fact, provides the basic contours of the map of public interpretation: you can tell what the respondents think the reports are about by looking first to the distribution of designations and their frequencies.

(3) "Assertions analysis," which indicates "the frequency with which certain objects are characterized in a particular way, i.e. roughly speaking, thematic analysis." (25) This is the most important form of analysis for our purposes, and Lasswell himself notes it to be "the most productive type of content analysis,

inasmuch as the 'thematic content' corresponds most nearly to the overall signification of a communication." (26) It is hardly sufficient to know the relative weights of subject matter. A map is comparatively meaningless until it is three-dimensional. The communications can refer to college administrators very frequently, but until we look more closely to determine how administrators are perceived by respondents and interpreters of the situation, we cannot advance any hypotheses concerning the future "participation" of administrators in specific courses of action.

ASSERTIONS: CATEGORIES AND RULES

It is extremely important to delineate and illustrate the categories of assertions at this point. Lasswell and his associates developed six categories of assertions for analyses of newspaper content and latent propaganda, and I have borrowed them wholesale. With illustrations drawn from the 400 communications (or "artifacts," as I sometimes refer to them) used in this study, they are:

Category 1: Unqualified Positive, that is, a favorable presentation without any hedging, e.g., "Colleges and universities are responding to this crisis [of demography] with courage and resourcefulness."

Category 2: Qualified Positive, that is, a favorable presentation that nonetheless includes unfavorable aspects, e.g. "Since major research universities powerfully influence the rest of academe, we

might turn first to the special problem of renewing baccalaureate programs in them."

Category 3: Qualified Negative, that is, an unfavorable presentation which nonetheless contains what Lasswell calls "ameliorating elements," e.g. "While many students pile up courses and earn degrees, they don't learn much of value."

Category 4: Unqualified Negative. No hedging here, either, e.g. "Some professors couldn't integrate those elements [of curriculum] if you put a gun to their heads."

Category 5: Balanced, that is, an assertion about a subject with both favorable and unfavorable elements involved, e.g. "While colleges are raising their standards for admission, and thus encouraging improvement in high schools, they are neglecting their standards for graduation, thus running the risk that improvement will be undone."

Category 6: Neutral (what Lasswell terms, "No Direction"), i.e. the presentation is devoid of any favorable or unfavorable linguistic or contextual clues, e.g. "Over the past few years, many colleges have returned to core curricula."

The best examples in Categories #1-5 involve epithets. It takes a powerful qualification to overcome judgments of students as "hard-working" (Category 1), "raw materials waiting to be shaped"

(Category 2), "high-tech peasants" (Category 3), or "barbarians" (Category 4). It is not surprising that we witness a surfeit of epithets in responses to the reports, particularly in assertions about the major groups of actors and issues in higher education. The noun "stands in an undivided empire of meaning, but it is an empire whose boundaries are undefined," Herbert Read wrote, adding that "hardly a sentence passes but it is necessary to delimit or extend the meaning of a noun; and this we do by linking it to an epithet." (27) The more abstract the noun or the more it denotes a class of objects, ideas or events, the more likely does the epithet come into being. And the more a specific type of epithet is applied to a designation (whether as an adjective, noun, or noun phrase playing an adjectival role) the more a key equation in the drama of propaganda is established.

On the other hand, a significant percentage of our assertions do not provide the relatively clear road-signs of epithets, and that is where judgment calls come into play. By strict canons of the methodology of content analysis, I am wanting on a key issue: the statistical reliability of my judgments. Ideally, at least two observers should have pored over the same 400 communications, performing the same acts of selection and classification by the same rules (see Appendix D), We would then have to determine the "inter-scorer reliability" by demonstrating a convincingly high coefficient of correlation for separately rendered judgments in each category. In the absence of a team of investigators and authors, though, I ask the reader to accept my judgments provisionally--at least to the extent to which they seem to have face validity.

The analysis of assertions (and, to a slightly lesser extent, the analysis of designations) is particularly important in light of a general hypothesis with which I embarked on this study. The hypothesis was that the language of response to the reports would change in stages corresponding to the rhetoric of response to the reports, that there are discrete "acts" in the drama of our propaganda. Since the three reports were issued over a period of four months, and since each dominated the communications in the press until the next report was issued, I assumed that it was possible to classify the responses within discrete periods of time, to wit:

Period 1: Oct. 19 - Nov. 26, 1984. The period dominated by Involvement in Learning.

Period 2: Nov. 27, 1984 - Feb. 10, 1985. The period dominated by To Reclaim a Legacy.

Period 3: Feb. 11 - March 31, 1985. The period dominated by Integrity in the College Curriculum.

Period 4: Apr. 1 - May 31, 1985. A period of "reprise" and delayed responses to all three reports.

Now, these divisions of time are not very neat (particularly those of Period 4), and I use the release dates of the reports as a convenience. But these classifications, as we will see, yield some intriguing hypotheses concerning the focus of debate, the rise and fall of symbols, and the accretion of meaning as actors and issues are sorted into bins of different values. In light of Ellul's notion that effective propaganda must be of sufficient duration to influence "participation,"

this analysis by period leads us to some insights into future directions for reform.

THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

We finally arrive at our data. The basic rules I established for selection of communications and the assertions within them to be analyzed are presented in Appendix D. As Lasswell and his associates remarked, it is very important that the criteria be clear, prior and applied consistently. These rules reduced the number of communications I examined from over 1200 available at the time the analysis was undertaken (July, 1985) to roughly 400. (28) While the three major time periods all "suffered" from this reduction, the effects were most pronounced for Period 1, during which the wire service stories played a greater role than they did in the other periods.

Let us look first at Appendix A, which classifies the types of communications examined, by period. The following trends can be observed as the drama of propaganda ages (we leave Period 4 aside because the clipping service contracts had expired and hence the evidence is slight):

1) The percentage of news articles falls at the same time that the percentage of editorials rises, reaching a peak in Period 3 (dominated by Integrity in the College Curriculum);
2) Even as the percentage of editorials rises, the percentage of letters-to-the-editor and guest editorials (Op-ed pieces) falls;

3) Likewise, the percentage of association and trade publication articles withers away by Period 3 (but makes a strong comeback in Period 4, for reasons discussed below).

None of these trends is surprising. As the drama opens, official opinion has yet to be formulated. But unofficial opinion (letters-to-the-editor, etc.) and the opinions of those with the most visible stakes in the competition of myths (the association and trade publications) substitute while official opinion is "warming up." Editors are slow to decide just how important a cultural issue may be to their readership, and slower still to decide just what tone the components of that issue warrant. Once they enter the drama, their stance tends to coalesce and clarify what was previously reported as news or offered as analysis or opinion.

One cannot reach this conclusion only on the basis of the classification of communications. One must also look to the overall trends evident in the classification of assertions presented in Appendix C, where we note:

Period 1: diffusion and ambiguity (the percentage of Balanced or Neutral assertions is comparatively high);

Period 2: a bi-modal pattern (Negative/Neutral), indicating a gradual shaping of tone;

Period 3: certainty and negativity (the percentage of Negative assertions is at its zenith, while the percentage of Balanced or Neutral statements is at its nadir);

Period 4: analytic (the percentage of Balanced or Neutral assertions is at its height at the same time that the previous imbalance between negative and positive statements modulates).

Given the distribution and weights of the types of communications, these characteristics also should surprise no one. Taken in their mass, news stories diffuse, features and reviews analyze, and editorials crystallize tone and provide the certainty of stance. The point is that the stages of the drama have distinct characteristics that are determined, in part, by the types of communications that dominate, and that each type of communication has an inherent bias toward certain categories of assertion.

The second significant feature of the data concerns the distribution of designations contained in the 403 communications (see Appendix B). It is important to note that I arrived at the 15 major designation categories inductively, and that while other designation categories were recorded (e.g. Business, the Federal Government), the contexts in which those symbols were raised often did not relate directly to the presentation or discussion of the reports. For example, the Federal Government was mentioned often in Period 2, but not within the "range of text" examined under my rules. Period 2 was dominated by To Reclaim a Legacy, and once its author, William Bennett, had been nominated to be Secretary of Education, both news articles and editorials dragged Federal policy (particularly, student financial assistance) into discussions of the educational quality issues raised in

the NEH report. Those portions of the text, which were usually tacked on, were excluded from the analysis.

The 15 major designations, extended by their allied terms (e.g. the designation, "Administrators," also covers assertions about "college officials," "deans," "presidents," "academic managers," and "academic leaders"), are the major terms of both the reports and the responses. Confining our attention to Periods 1, 2, and 3, and remembering that each of them is dominated (but not exclusively ruled) by a different national report, the data offer some fairly plausible hypotheses as to how each report differs from the others. In other words, I content that the sheer number of designations (category x period) gives us a phenomenological indication of what the reports are about. The question is whether the representation of reality (dominance of a designation) in the communication matches the presentation in the reports. To a significant degree, the answer is "yes," to wit:

Integrity in the College Curriculum (Period 3) does, in fact, place a greater emphasis on the faculty role than the other two reports, and the percentage of designations in the "Faculty" bin is highest in Period 3);

To Reclaim a Legacy (Period 2) does, in fact, place college administrators (or "academic leaders," etc.) at the center of responsibility for what has gone awry, and, in part because the is focused on a specific set of disciplines, pays more attention to academic departments than do the other two reports. These emphases are well

reflected in the distribution of designations in Period 2 in comparison with the other two major Periods.

Involvement in Learning (Period 1) in fact, covers a broader scope of actors in the system of higher education than do the other two reports, particularly through its inclusion of issues concerning governance (hence, more frequent mention of trustees, legislators, and accreditation agencies); and, through its elevation of assessment, is far more explicit about issues of standards than the other two reports.

In all these cases, the distribution of designations is verified by the content of the reports themselves. But far more interesting from the point of view of the drama of propaganda are the cases in which the distribution of designations does not find agreement in the emphases of the reports or vice-versa (that is, when the emphases of the reports are not confirmed by the topics selected by reporters, editors, and other respondents). For example, those readers who believe, as do I, that Involvement in Learning was the most student-centered of any of the reports on education (higher education or otherwise) issued in recent years, ought to be severely disappointed that only 10% of the designations in Period 1 (versus 14-15% in the other three periods) were about students.

One phenomenon that explains this "anomaly" is the steady and dramatic decline in the proportion of designations of "Higher Education in General" across the time span of our sample of communications. There

is common sense to this. When the subject of the quality of higher education first breaks on the national stage, no matter how specific its first incarnation (and Involvement in Learning was rather specific in both its diagnosis and many of its recommendations), the tendency of the response is to protect the local province by talking about the world. But once the target audience becomes accustomed to the terms, tenor and tone of the drama, it is more willing to talk about the province. So to the extent to which we reduce the weight of assertions about "higher education in general," the weight of assertions about administrators or students or curriculum will rise--unless, of course, a specific report calls forth comments on a very particular issue.

Corresponding to the decrease in the proportion of assertions concerning "higher education in general" is an increase in the proportion of statements concerning particular "local institutions or systems." This phenomenon, however, cannot be considered apart from the assertions analysis data presented in Appendices C and E. As the tone of public presentation of the reports shifts toward the negative, a defensive reaction sets in. Commentators quoted in the press tend to say, in so many words, "Yes, but that's not true here at Old Siwash." Against a dim national backdrop reflected in the reports and crystallized by a reporter's question, a college president (in particular) or dean understandably seeks to set his/her institution apart from the calamity, and certainly says nothing that would cast aspersions on his/her reign or that would thwart his/her career advancement.

There appear to be two exceptions to this tendency. The first occurs in Period 1, in which the local president or dean is not yet sure of the terms of debate, and, not wishing to expose himself/herself to subsequent ridicule, offers a neutral assessment (Categories 5 or 6) of the current status of quality at Old Siwash (for example, by saying, "we're studying various propositions for reform"). This type of statement only reinforces the general trend of diffusion and ambiguity we have noted in Period 1.

The second exception occurs in Period 2, where we discover a modicum of candor. The NEH report highlighted the role of a specific set of disciplines in the college curriculum. It is comparatively easy to admit, with a proper tinge of regret, that "we are not doing it at Old Siwash," since the implicit recommendations of To Reclaim a Legacy (there are no explicit recommendations) have been around since the Yale report of 1828, and Old Siwash has considered them previously. Indeed, there is a significant incidence of such statements (13% of all assertions made about specific local institutions/systems) in Period 2.

One of the more revealing assertions analyses we can undertake with this data involves two variables: designation x period, and it is an analysis that can be reinforced by considering the epithets applied to some of the major designations. By way of illustration, let us consider two designations: faculty (a core group of actors) and curriculum (a core topic).

FACULTY. The role and emotive position of faculty in the drama of propaganda changes considerably over time. The range of judgments in Period 1 is very diffuse, and only 25% of them fall in the two "unqualified" categories (positive or negative). Involvement in Learning did not pin a specific responsibility on faculty for the "warning signals" that otherwise received much attention in the press, and presented only the excessive reliance on graduate teaching assistants and part-time faculty in a negative light. To the extent to which commentators understood the role of faculty in the NIE Study Group's report, they used epithets such as "immobilized" and "baffled" (attributions that cast faculty in a passive role, hence not the direct instruments of decline) more than epithets such as "self-righteous" (an attribution that implies an active disposition with negative consequences). In addition, administrators, who were widely quoted in the news and feature article formats that dominated Period 1, tended to offer balanced, neutral, or qualified positive statements about faculty. A local dean or vice president, after all, would face uncomfortable pressures by making negative statements about faculty to the press.

In Period 2, the distribution of assertions shifts, with over half of the judgments of faculty falling into the two unqualified categories (and of these judgments, 6 out of 7 were negative). This is a key development in the drama of propaganda: a movement from ambiguity to certainty. While administrators responding to To Reclaim a Legacy still tended to make balanced or neutral statements about faculty, others applied epithets such as "shallow" and "lackluster," attributes that indirectly explain to the public why college education in the humanities

(and, by implication, in other fields as well) has lost its vitality. The writers of editorials, columns, and Op-Ed pieces who played a far greater role in the total package of communications in Period 2 than in Period 1 (43% v. 17% of all communications) naturally seek to sort symbols into the bins of certainty. The symbol of "faculty" thus becomes more negative, ready to be reinforced by the next stage of the drama.

Indeed, no one was disappointed. Integrity in the College Curriculum was regarded by some as a full-scale assault on faculty, and hence stimulated a very defensive response. Thus, fully two-thirds of the attributions concerning faculty in Period 3 are hedged (Categories 2 and 3), balanced, or neutral. At the same time, over half the attributions are negative (Categories 3 and 4); and negative epithets such as "resistent," "uncaring," and "jealous" imply that faculty are more actively responsible for the dismal state of student learning than do those epithets used in Period 2.

Even though the evidence is thin, it appears that, by Period 4, a more analytical and balanced era of assessment has commenced. The epithets used to describe faculty are more sympathetic to their position (e.g. "besieged" or "frustrated"). What has happened by this time is that all the potential respondents have had the chance to consider the three reports together, have witnessed a crescendo of emotive statements, have realized that there is a great deal of public pressure and that the game is serious, have turned their attention from defensiveness to reconstruction, and have recognized that action will

not occur without faculty participation. Perhaps due to an understandable lag in the diffusion of the symbols of the drama, let alone the period of digestion of the three reports, Period 4 evidences a high percentage of communications from college newspapers and a resurgence of communications from associations. It is reassuring that these sources tend to be more analytic at this stage. In a way, this shift demonstrates that the propaganda has succeeded: the dominant tone of assertions about the symbol has been repeated and sustained, and we appear to be on the eve of participation--the goal of propaganda in democratic societies.

CURRICULUM. "One of the rudimentary protections of the human being against insecurity is repetition," Lasswell wrote (29). The more abstract, generalized or distant the subject, the more readers need repetition to help them interpret the issues. This is certainly the case with the key topic of "curriculum," a vast area addressed in different ways and with different degrees of concretion, in all three reports.

Given the generalized nature of the topic, it is not surprising that the epithets applied to the designation are highly concrete, in fact, metaphorical. For example, our data evidence a rising incidence of metaphors concerning food applied to "curriculum." By Period, these include: soupy (1), pottage (2), stew (2), Swiss cheese (3), cheese doodles (3), clam dip (3), junk food (3), and bubble gum (3). This remarkable consensus may be due to some of the metaphors used in the reports themselves (supermarket, cafeteria, etc.) and the tendency

of commentators to seek novelty of expression within a language framework provided by the objects of commentary. But there is a tenor of this metaphorical configuration that tells us much about the potential role of curriculum in higher education reform. Curriculum, this configuration says, is formless and not very nutritious; but more importantly, it is passive, acted upon, served. If so, it may be one of the more easily altered of the major variables in higher education. To counter one of our proverbial similes, changing curriculum is not more difficult than moving a cemetery; whereas changing faculty may be, as the effort requires a more complex understanding. Perhaps for that reason, and among our designations, "curriculum" does not receive as much attention as "faculty" in Period 4, the period of analytical reconstruction of the reports.

This brief analysis of the attributions of "curriculum" across the four periods is very different from the analysis of "faculty." My purpose was to illustrate the "way of life" that is often unintentionally revealed by language in the course of a drama of propaganda, and the ways in which, through repetition, language can establish a concept that invites us to participate. The judgments of curriculum, particularly in Periods 2 and 3, were overwhelmingly negative; but the metaphors mitigate that negativism.

FROM CONTENT ANALYSIS TO RHETORIC: THE ISSUE OF EXCUSES

As a last look at what content analysis can do for us, consider the distribution of judgments concerning the designation, "Colleges/Higher Education in General." Recall that the percentage of assertions under

this designation declines rather dramatically from Period 1 to Period 4 But what remains is still but substantial and significant. To be sure, as the overall percentage of designations declines, the percentage of negative assertions rises (from 36% in Period 1 to 61% in Period 2 to 67% in Period 3), but the percentage of what I call "hedged" assertions (Categories 2, 3 and 5), adjusted for the natural diffusion previously noted for Period 1, remains stable at about half of all assertions.

What is being hedged? When one looks closely at the assertions made about higher education in general in response to these reports, three manifestations of a single line of argument emerge. The argument is that, while there are "warning signals" or deficiencies, the current system of higher education in America is not at fault. Rather, there are forces external to the current state of affairs that "excuse" some of the trends we see. Three major external forces are repeatedly cited.

The first (principally in Period 1) lies in a combination of demographics and the preparation of entering freshmen. This is precisely the kind of argument that Involvement in Learning went out of its way to preclude, but evidently was not successful. The commentators thus claimed that while our colleges may evidence loose standards for degrees, the demographics argue that they have no choice in the matter. The second external force is American business enterprise, or, more accurately, our perceptions of the attitudes and practices of the business world. These are most prominent in Period 2. A statement such as "corporations cannot make money from the Nibelungenlied," while not typical in level of diction or allusion, is typical in spirit: it

"excuses" students from their patterns of curricular choice. The third is the broader cultural battlefield, and in many ways, the "excuses" here are the most interesting.

Editorial writers have a penchant for blaming American cultural values for the ills of education. The target is mushy and invites the limits of news metaphor, invective and epithet, e.g. "calculated ignorance," "idiot savants," "bars of blindness," "intellectual sloth," "mindless cogs," "grasping boors"--and these are all in one editorial (San Bernadino Sun, Nov. 27, 1984)! What can American higher education possibly accomplish, one columnist asks, in the face of airline gift catalogues offering a set of richly bound great books (with simulated leather covers and gold foil filagree) that actually turn out to be hollow hiding places for videotapes (no doubt, of "Conan the Barbarian")? However we may agree with the sentiment, this type of commentary diffuses the issue because it offers excuses. In fact, when To Reclaim a Legacy is accused of not going far enough or not asking the right questions, the editorial writer of columnist is usually seeking to move the debate out of narrow academic contexts and into the broader spectrum of social and economic values, and to consideration of the behavior of other institutions in society.

If some editorial writers and columnists take the heat off the colleges by citing current manifestations of broader cultural values, there is another school that tends to blame the past. The argument here is very simple: "It's all the fault of the 1960s and 1970s." This argument is offered in fully 17% of all communications recorded for

Period 2 and 10% of those in Period 3. What it obviously does is to "explain" current conditions by reference to a presumably inexorable logic of consequence. The explanation is very convenient in our drama of propaganda because it allows the reader to develop his/her own vaguely negative image of what "the fault of the 60s and 70s" means. Whether or not the reader attributes whatever happened back then to the actions of colleges (students, faculty, administration), the effect is to excuse them from present responsibility. When that judgment dominates, the competing mythology advances, and the resolution of the drama is stalled. We are not liable to participate in reform if we accept a line of propaganda that undermines potential action with an appeal to the forces of history. That acceptance is part of a complex belief system. Charles Stevenson helps us understand this analysis with the following illustration:

> Suppose that a man, believing that it is raining, should in fact put on his raincoat. Is he acting solely on the belief that it is raining? Clearly not. He would not have put it on unless he also believed that it would serve to keep him dry when he went out, and unless he wanted both to go out and keep dry . . . . Thus there are many dispositions involved, all of them relevant to any given action. Change any of these dispositions, and, with all else constant, the action will change as well. (30)

In other words, however they may be disposed to participate in reform, once a group of actors repeats a belief excusing a condition that, in J. L. Austin's account, is "bad, wrong, inept, unwelcome, or in some other of the numerous possible ways untoward," (31) that group will not participate the same way--if at all.

The excuse itself is a symbolic action, part of a larger flow of argument. The intentions of these actions are as important to our

Act I: Negation and Denial

Act II: Purposive Misconstruction

Act III: Ethical Judgment: Reconstruction

Act IV: Aesthetic Judgment: Acceptance

Act V: Action

This sequence does not necessarily correspond to the patterns of assertions we have previously analyzed, and that divergence is related to the difference between the surfaces of language and the intention of the utterance.

Act I, Scene 1 can be subtitled, "Absolute Negation." The dominant strain of responses at this stage was manifested in strange forms of the argumentum ad hominem offered up in terms of the symbolics of the drama, not the substance of the reports. Act I, scene 1 takes place in Washington (in the case of national reports issued by national bodies, it always does), where statements are issued in association and trade publications, or by representatives of those associations, whose job is to justify the conditions of their employment by raising flags. So, in the case of Involvement in Learning, we heard everything from "this is another Government report, therefore nobody should pay any attention to it" to those who thought a Study Group ought to be a Commission and said, "there wasn't an X (student, legislator, stage college faculty, community college dean, librarian, research assistant, or football coach) on the Study Group, therefore the Report is seriously stilted if not outrightly invalid."

This foolishness calls for two retorts. First, while Involvement in Learning was published by the U. S. Department of Education, it was not written by the Department. The "Government" had no obligation to do anything more than place the report in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system, walk away, and let the academic community figure out that the report was in the public domain. Former Secretary Bell chose to publish it because he found it provocative, not because he agreed with it; and be made both positions clear in presenting the report at his news conference on October 22, 1984.

The second is more critical to our argument, as it relates to the "perceived voice" in any national report, the identity of the authors, and the way in which the composition of a report-writing group influences both the substance and style of the document produced. The last time we created a Noah's Ark commission in higher education--with two Xs of everything--the yield was extraordinarily low. (33) That stands to reason: you may recall that when Noah and his two-of-everything disembarked from the Ark, they didn't know where they were--and nobody else did, either. The cultural historian, Erich Auerbach, describes the language of landscape in Genesis as "indeterminate"--and that befits a Noah's Ark strategy. "Indeterminate," indeed, describes the language of reports written by Noah's Ark commissions.

It may be countered that the National Commission on Excellence in Education had one of everything, and produced a very determinate

landscape in A Nation at Risk. I might agree with that analysis if, in fact, 17 people on that Commission had actually written the Report. But 17 people did not write it: one person on the Commission wrote it (Gerald Holton), a few others inserted a line or two here and there, still others (notably, David Gardner and William Baker) edited and jiggled with it, and a couple of outside hired hands did the polishing. The greater the dominance of a single voice, the more definitive the landscape.

Of the three recent national reports on higher education, only one indicated a single author. And, indeed, Secretary Bennett is the author of To Reclaim a Legacy. To be sure, he listened to 30-40 members of a "Study Group" discuss the issues he wished to write about; and, to be sure, he distributed a draft of the Report to those 30-40 people for their comments and suggestions. But he is the sole author, and on record as such. (34) It is precisely for that reason that in all the public commentary on these reports, To Reclaim a Legacy was not subject to Act I, scene 1. It is very difficult to issue an absolute negation and to offer silly ad hominem arguments when someone's name is on the cover. But precisely because a name was on the cover, follow-up phone interview quotations from Bennett were very frequent in the press accounts. Those quotations allowed for emendations that shifted the emphases of the news and feature stories from the report to Bennett's gloss, which was highly substantive. Respondents might have characterized the report with such epithets as "problematic," "grossly generalized," "doubtful," "defensive," "too rigid," and "unfair," but each of those epithets demands a substantive qualification. On the other hand, as soon as

Bennett's name was floated as a potential replacement for Secretary Bell, epithets such as "sinister" and "contaminated" entered the public judgments of respondents, and the report was described, not in terms of substance, but as "an enormous power play."

On the other hand, it is much easier to deny an abstract "Study Group" or "Commission," or (as the AAC called it) "Oversight Committee." The flags you wish to raise, the symbolic issues upon which your position--moral, organizational, or otherwise--depend, are more effective against an indeterminate body and a diffuse voice.

The AAC report, Integrity in the College Curriculum, was written largely by one person, though issued under the name of an abstraction. The style is unified; but the speaker (Fred Rudolph) is not identified. In fact, the AAC report is presented in such a way that it is never quite clear who is responsible for it. And partly for that reason, it, too, was exempt from the type of responses otherwise witnessed in Act I, scene 1.

The NIE Study Group, however, not only listed their names, but provided enough biographical information so that those who were predisposed to do so could shape their criticisms more on the biographies than the substance. The critics' task was made easier by the obvious discontinuities of style in Involvement in Learning. To read Involvement is to read a classic in the genre of reports from faculty committees. One person may have drafted the Report, but as an amenuensis, and it is obvious that every line and every paragraph was

subsequently negotiated. In fact, a serious stylistic analysis could deduce the composition of the group by citing everything from sociological and economic phraseology (sometimes called "jargon") to metaphors, allusions, and archaisms that could only be the product of graduate education in the humanities. Combine the diffuseness of style, choppiness of presentation, abstract nature of the Study Group yet concrete details of the biographies, and one has a very fit subject for Act I, scene 1.

Scene 2 of Act 1 is that of "Denial," a considerable advance over the absolute nonsense of absolute negation. But the setting is the same--Washington--and the purpose is the same: raise the symbolic flag. Defend the territory, whether provincial or global. At least "Denial" acknowledges that a report has some substance. But it merely fires salvos into the sea, attacking a report for what it is not, and concluding, in a form of fallacious logic called the petitio principii, or begging the question, that the Report is suspect because it is not about X (adult basic education, technical education in community colleges, access and college admissions, research, etc.). For Involvement in Learning, the practitioners of Denial had only to read the bold type numbered recommendations--not the discussions that accompanied each nor the analytic sections that set the stage for those recommendations--in order to load the cannons. For To Reclaim a Legacy, as previously noted, the petitio principii consisted in the accusation that Bennett did not go far enough and/or did not ask the "right" questions because he confined his attention to the Academy instead of a

quasi-literate "Datsun 300ZX-oriented" culture that vaunts its disdain for serious thought at every opportunity.

All three reports tried to protect themselves against this foolish fallacy in introductory statements, forewords, "letters of transmittal," and other portions of books that most people in higher education (let alone the press) never read. In the case of Involvement, for example, there were three such statements, including a delineation of values that opened the text. But when a respondent is intent on using a national report for propagandistic purposes of his/her own, these statements can be ignored with impunity, since he/she knows that in the fast action of a broad, symbolic drama, the media will never have the chance to issue a contradiction--or even to quote someone of contradictory opinion. And when the opening Act of the drama is conveyed principally by the wire services and news stories, with a comparatively low level of official editorial commentary, respondents intent on raising a counter-propaganda are more likely to succeed, particularly if they use the unofficial editorial capacities of association and trade publications.

Such was the case in the attack on Involvement in Learning in Period 1 by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges on the grounds that the report was not about community colleges, and, to a lesser extent, that it was not about access. Just as the national press was eager to promote a report with metaphors of diseases (35), so it was eager to find a second opinion in the response (if the doctor is right, there is no good press). Paradoxically, the national leadership of this attack established an umbrella defense that, in effect, absolved

community colleges from the criticisms of all reports, and allowed community college presidents to sally forth with non-sequiturs such as "because community college faculty have no other commitments, the quality of teaching at community colleges is better than elsewhere." The success of the initial effort to establish a counter-mythology here is ironic because it largely removed community colleges from the subsequent debate, from the drama that leads to participation and reform. In terms of our designations analysis above, community colleges are rarely mentioned in the press after Period 1.

Of course the situation might have been different. Had Involvement in Learning, in particular, given major attention to the status of the American community college, the recommendations would have been so bloody as to distract everyone's attention from the broader issues concerning the improvement of student learning. Had any of these reports given major attention to access and college admissions, they would not have played on the national stage as reports about higher education, i.e. on what happens to students between matriculation and graduation; rather, we would have witnessed a renewed (but short-lived), redundant, and unproductive attack on secondary schools.

A few closing words on Act I. First, while there may be unmeditated self-mockery in the performances of respondents (e.g. the dean who, on reading a brief newspaper account of Integrity in the College Curriculum, said, "I am not going to agree too much with this report"), there is no premeditated villany or mendacity. The state of higher

education is not so critical to the national security that we witness, as Orwell wrote of the Spanish Civil War, "newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie." (36) The misconstructions, excuses and deflections which we will mark in Act II are at least grounded in substance, and to the extent to which they are purposeful, are subject to ethical judgment. While ethical judgments may be highly emotive, they are not groundless. What we witnesses in Act I, in negation and denial, are the effects of groundless passion.

The transition to Act II is a variation on the theme of denial. When the critics began to read beyond the bold type of the 27 recommendations in Involvement, they acknowledged that, in fact, the NIE Study Group did talk about access and did talk about community colleges and did address recommendations to adult, part-time and commuter students. At that point, it was rhetorically essential for the antagonists to escalate the argument, to repeat and sustain it at a different level. Counter-propaganda, after all, does not succeed without repetition and duration. So the informal party line then advanced the notion that these issues were not in the report "enough" or that they weren't in it "in the right way." Likewise, the antagonists conceded that while the AAC report did not so much assault faculty as it critiqued the functions of faculty decision-making bodies such as the curriculum committee, its fatal flaw was a failure to take "the effects of collective bargaining" into account. This stance (so easily recognizable in the concession of the adverbial clause) introduces the potential for reconstruction which emerges later in the play. But by

that time, as we will observe, the actors have changed and the scene is no longer Washington--which perhaps explains why the terms are more constructive.

ACT II: PURPOSIVE MISCONSTRUCTION

The responses in this Act of the drama are dominated by misconceptions, misreadings, deflections, and excuses, some naive, but most of them intentional.

The appearance of excuses demands attention to the language, as well as the rhetoric of response, because, as J. L. Austin has observed, there are clusters of words and word types associated with excuses. The former include such abstract nouns as "accident" and purpose" and verbs such as "intend" and "attempt." (37) The latter feature adverbs because the excuse often claims that people did or said things in certain ways, e.g., in Austin's examples, "unwittingly," "spontaneously" or "impulsively." (38)

Excuses arise when the prima facie evidence is tough to deny, when the data are hard, in fact, when there is only one data base. There is a significant difference between attacking the NIE Study Group's assertion (based on National Longitudinal Survey data) that roughly half the students who enter college with the intention of receiving the baccalaureate actually do so within 7½ years, and attacking its assertion that student performance on 11 of 15 GRE Subject Area Tests

declined over the past two decades. One can argue with the first assertion if one uses a different data base such as that of the Cooperative Institutional Research Project (where the sample is confined to those who entered college as full-time students); but one cannot argue with the second by saying, "Yes, but it's all those foreign students taking the tests"--which is the latest theme of the test-score excuses, and one that the data do not support. (39)

There is another kind of excuse that appears in Act II, one that is far more global and far more troublesome because its end result is the same as that for Act I. In its most recent and prevalent incarnation it reads, "We're so diverse in higher education that we cannot even talk to each other, let alone engage in reform efforts based on common principles." This flight to the bunker of diversity tragically turns one of the greatest virtues of American higher education into a monstrous liability. Involvement in Learning, for example, started with the student and the processes and environments for learning, and assumed (based on a modest amount of research evidence collected over the past 50 years) that there are enough generic characteristics of both learning processes and learning environments that we can conduct--and improve--an educational enterprise. If there is nothing generic, the enterprise is bankrupt, and we might as well fold the tents. If you participate in advancing a counter-propaganda based on the diversity argument, you are folding the tents.

Then there are the purposive misreadings, e.g. that the NIE Study Group recommended two years of "humanities" for all college graduates.

The Study Group made no such statement: it said two years of traditional arts and sciences. The misreading is a fascinating reflection of the habit of the academic mind to equate "liberal education" with the "humanities," and to attack the equation in terms of academic politics. Or that Involvement recommended that national standardized tests be administered to all students as a condition of graduation. The Study Group made no such statement. In fact, the Group chose its words very carefully in the recommendation concerning the "warranty" of degrees and in all its recommendations in which assessment of student learning and growth was the subject. But if one wants to use a form of the argumentum ad populum to generate fear of national standards, this particular misreading is very handy.

Some of these misreadings were used to support the contentions and recommendations of the reports. On this matter it is interesting to note that those commentators who used honorific terms in the general presentation of any of the reports (e.g. "cogent," "trenchant," "commendable," "timely," etc.), also tended to misread some of the key recommendations. It is difficult to be charitable toward these commentators, particularly when they are college administrators or faculty. Integrity in the College Curriculum proved to be a very strong magnet for ignoratio elenchi (ignorance of the point at issue) utterances in this vein. In response to the central recommendation of the AAC report (the "minimum required curriculum" set forth in terms of nine "criteria or objectives"), I recorded, in 183 communications:

o 10 comments that equated the AAC recommendation with

distribution requirements by major division of curriculum (humanities, sciences, etc.);

- o 6 comments that equated the fulfillment of the AAC recommendation with its existence as part of the mission statement of a college (there is more magic than logic to this);
- o 8 recitations of course-titles intended to indicate a positive response to the AAC recommendation.

And, in the name of a college's commitment to the quality of teaching (an issue common to all three reports), some of the most spectacular non-sequiturs were uttered, e.g. a paragraph which advanced the idea that because a college named buildings for professors who had been employed at the school for 40 years or more, "we have inspiring teaching."

Deflections differ radically from misreadings, and less radically from excuses. In the course of an argument, a deflection involves a turn of subject from the one at issue (which may cause the speaker some discomfort, logically and otherwise) to one on the same general field that nonetheless begs the question and diverts the attention of the audience. Respondents from the Academy are very adept at this rhetorical twist, and offered four general lines of question-begging:

(1) What I call the "Federal configuration," i.e. student financial aid, Reagan administration policies, Secretary Bennett's rhetoric;

(2) Discussions of college and university finance, exclusive of

student aid (this deflection usually begins with a potentially productive statement about the costs of implementing recommendations, but swiftly shifts to an exclusive focus on general money matters);

(3) Comments on the quality of the reports--their language, their length (according to faculty and administrators, nothing less than 1000 page tomes, with discussions covering every situation and contingency, would do), their very physical presentation as published documents; and

(4) "Bad eggs and research." The commentary begins with an offhand concession that there may be a few bad eggs in the house, but then shifts to the achievements of university-based research, and dwells upon them at length.

The problem with the excuses, misreadings and deflections is that they assumed greater importance in the minds of the commentators than anything the reports had to offer. More importantly, the persons and organizations carrying these "arguments" around like reliquiaries, were engaging in avoidance behavior. They ran the risk of writing themselves right off the stage of the drama, and later being caught in its consequences, because few of these rhetorical strategies even contribute to the competing myth. The "bad eggs and research" deflection, for the most prominent example, can be offered with a modicum of justification by only 30 of the 3300 institutions of higher education in the United States. And more than half of those 30 are public institutions which may later be trapped by legislative mandates and portrayed as defensive and reactionary.

ACT III: ETHICAL JUDGMENT

Excuses, misreadings and deflections are often stimulated by a highly concrete or striking statement or recommendation in one of the reports. The very same statements, though, also call forth normative judgments that advance counter-proposals. The normative judgment is recognizable by what I call an "ethical configuration of language," a noticeable incidence of terms such as "should," "ought," "right," "obligation," etc. Because utterances including these words are often loaded with emotive meaning, and because those "performances" inherently involve assessments of the acts of others, their use generates adversarial situations.

But at the same time, the ethical judgment is hardly a negation, denial, excuse, misreading or deflection. In this case, the ethical judgment is grounded in what a report actually says, in an expression that is the "act" of its author(s). In their most typical incarnation in the communications I examined, these judgments "reconstruct" an analysis or recommendation in the form, "they should have said that . . . ." A typical subjunctive variation of this form is, "If they acknowledged x, they ought to have acknowledged y." In the indicative mood, we also find, "In recommending x, the authors have an obligation to consider y."

The very form of these statements advocates the "y." And the "y" is a reconstruction, emendation or interpolation that considerably advances the drama--both the rhetorical drama and the drama of

propaganda. The latter context is important here because these reconstructive statements are not evident until Period 3, dominated by Integrity in the College Curriculum, and the period in which the proportion of negative assertions in the propaganda was at its height. I cannot attribute the rise of reconstructive statements directly to Integrity, since most of them are about the other two reports. But the months of negation, denial, and excuses may have proved cathartic and necessary. The public repetition of assertions slowly brings forth a "private" attitude of impatience among key target groups; and there must be something unsettling in witnessing one's "leaders" constantly making defensive and foolish statements in the press. This private impatience finds its way into the public drama best in feature articles/reviews and in Op-ed pieces, both of which dominate (43%) the communication types in Period 4.

These reconstructions are hardly comprehensive. They tend to pick a single issue. Some, as noted, are emendations, such as the considerable number that sought to advance or qualify the implicit canon of the Humanities in To Reclaim a Legacy. Nearly all these emendations accept the idea of a canon, the idea of an intellectual authority (an issue also raised in Integrity, and implied in the section, "To Students," in Involvement). The normative utterances, though, the "shoulds" and "oughts," have as much to do with the responsibility for stating a canon as they do with its contents. This tendency is most apparent in "ideological" statements in which critics of the Left accept the centrality of Western Civilization and its artifacts in Bennett's formulation, but then turn introspective with the judgment that "we

should have said this long ago instead of conceding the issue to the Right." (40) Or, in responding to the recommendations on assessment in Involvement in Learning, we find frequent references to the "oughts" of the faculty role in the face of potential state intervention.

Reconstructions can also be stimulated by a phrase that the respondent judges to be insufficiently explained in a report. "College-level learning" in Involvement is a good example because it is part of the "standards issue" that is perceived as more of a central topic in Involvement than in the other two reports. The reconstruction accepts the ethical imperative that lies behind the idea of college-level learning as a guide to standards of content (that is, as Involvement tried to make clear, colleges have to keep their promises to students in terms of what degrees signify). But it finds inadequate the scattered hints of what "college-level learning" means (12th grade norms required for release from remedial classes, the ability to explain an issue of Scientific American, the ability to discuss the articles of a foreign language newspaper, etc.) Thus, one noted reconstruction reported in the trade press claimed that we would be better able to keep our promises to students if we disposed of textbooks and multiple-choice examinations at the college level, and if we distinguished "those subjects truely worthy of college study" from those "better learned in high school" because we owed our students the challenge of understanding "competing versions of reality." By this reconstruction, for example, foreign languages should be taught in high schools, while area studies should be taught in colleges.

A final example of the reconstructions of Act III lies in the court of costs. That is, a consideration of the costs of implementing recommendations can be used (and, indeed, was used) in Acts I and II. In Act I, costs were raised as part of the overall "performance" of denial, and were most often found linked to epithets describing a report as "unrealistic" or "naive." Rhetorically, this is a very convenient and effective method of counter-propaganda, as the American public has been conditioned to associate the word, "costs," with "deficits," "spending," "debt," and other words that carry negative implications concerning the national bank account. "Cost" is a stock word that is used to substitute for a whole set of related negative symbols. Thus, commentators could issue a blanket denunciation of Involvement in Learning on the grounds that its recommendations were, prima facie, expensive to implement.

In Act II, the cost issue becomes part of a deflection. Involvement, in particular, invited this response because it offered a number of recommendations in which costs were explicit, e.g. "states should revise funding formulas" (corollary to recommendation #1), "academic and student service administrators should provide adequate fiscal support" (recommendation #6), "state officials should establish special and alternative funding" (recommendation #25), and, of course, the Big One: "State legislatures and boards of trustees should reverse the decline in faculty purchasing power by increasing faculty salaries at a rate greater than inflation" (#26). When four out of twenty-seven recommendations carry explicit language on costs, and when three of the four recommendations are directed at "states," it is easy to see just

how the issue can be deflected, and in a manner purposefully blind to the state focus. That is, the commentators, particularly college administrators, reacted as if the word, "state," had never been written, rolled up all these steps in one ball, and pronounced, in so many words, "they will cost millions and Involvement doesn't say where the money will come from, therefore the recommendations cannot be taken seriously." Remember that one of the purposes of participation in Act II is to absolve oneself from responsibility, and this deflection does just that.

In Act III, commentators start to take out their calculators. Though we are not privileged to inspect their calculation routines in the press, there are indirect manifestions of attempts to reconstruct one recommendation or another in terms of costs. Rough estimates, to be sure (and sometimes one wonders where the figures come from), and estimates always phrased in terms of percentages, not dollars. The "ethical" dimension turns up in a budding consciousness of cost-benefit analysis and in consideration of potential trade-offs. The issue of costs raises that of obligations. Where are our obligations most significant, some commentators ask, hence where should our allocation priorities lie? What is improvement "worth"? While some of these are practical questions, they presuppose normative answers. Something is happening.

ACT IV: AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

How do we know when an institution or association or any group of

key players in our drama is serious about adopting a recommendation from one of the reports, indeed, serious about the reports themselves? I contend that the language and rhetoric of response provide the clues. When judgments become aesthetic, we know that the speaker or writer has reached a stage of "appreciation" that may lead to action. Wittgenstein uses a metaphor that may help us understand what kind of language and rhetoric to watch for. A man tries on a suit at a tailor shop. What does he say?

> "That's the right length," "That's too short," "That's too narrow." Words of approval play no role . . . . How do I show my approval of a suit? Chiefly by wearing it often, liking it when it is seen, etc. (41)

The fact that the man is at the tailor's, trying on the suit, and issuing judgments concerning the relation and proportion of the garment to his own circumstances is what counts. These are three indispensible parts of a "performance." The words used in the judgments, then, are determined by the context and the role of the actor, and they accompany concrete actions taken in that context. The words do not explicitly "disapprove," rather they adjust. Of course, as Wittgenstein also points out, there is a large difference between what happens "when a person who knows a lot about suits goes to the tailor" and "when a person who knows nothing about suits goes." (42) By Act IV, by the moment of aesthetic judgment, those who are going to the tailor's know a good deal about suits.

By its very nature, we do not see much of Act IV in the press. It is not that aesthetic judgments are private by definition. For the

individual, in fact, they are public. Aesthetic judgment arises, as Kant said, when the individual consciousness "agrees with" the subject, and we do not know an aesthetic judgment unless words of approval or disapproval are spoken. (43) For an institution such as a college, on the other hand, we know that aesthetic judgment has been made only by the act of trying on the suit; and this act is reported to us, if at all, in fugitive literature: reports of presidents to boards of trustees, student government resolutions, accounts of faculty development seminars, comments at public meetings.

At the 1985 Annual Conference of the American Association for Higher Education, for example, a Vice President for Academic Affairs engaged in the following reflection:

> I've always had a problem with part-time faculty, and, while Involvement in Learning didn't explain all of my problem, it got a lot of it. I have 150 part-timers. Half of them are there for special courses. I couldn't get them any other way, and I don't want them for anything else. The other half teach an average of 4 courses a year for us. It would take us 28 full-timers to replace them. On the surface, the cost does not seem to be worth it. . . the bottom line (including benefits and overhead) comes out to about $950,000, three times the salary we pay the 75 part-timers. But it actually costs us a good deal more than that for the part-timers. They use support, too; but they cost us far more in terms of administrative time, student complaints, and worry. Can you put a price tag on that? Can you put a price tag on what you may be sacrificing in quality by letting the status quo ride? . . . I'd like to consolidate some of those lines, but in stages, and perhaps add $10 a year in tuition across 8000 FTEs for every 5 full-timers we got as a result of the cosolidation. I know where those potential conversions lie, and what the political and organizational dangers are. Remedial English and math? You don't want potentially tenurable empires in those areas. Accounting and Nursing? If I could honestly be persuaded that the professional practitioner who teaches on the side (as opposed to the faculty member who practices on the side) was actually bringing students the benefits of state-of-the-art professional practice, I might not be tempted to consolidate . . . .

What the speaker is doing is trying on clothes ("I've always had a problem with. . .it would take . . .on the surface . . . But the cost us far more . . .Can you even measure. . .? I'd like to consolidate. . .You don't want . . .empires, etc.") There are no slogans here, no denials, no excuses, no deflections, not even reconstructions. We have journeyed through those deserts. Even the calculations are on the table: the speaker is not throwing numbers at walls. The Report has been accepted. There is peace among the words.

Could we have reached this stage in the rhetorical drama without the propaganda? Could we have passed through what Kenneth Burke describes as

> the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Market Place, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard, the Give and Take, the wavering line of pressure and counterpressure, the Logomachy, the onus of ownership, the War of Nerves, the War (44)

to such "peaceful moments" in which the "endless competition" inherent in rhetoric transcends itself? I do not believe so. Without the sustained bombardment of assertions and epithets in the mass media, and without the self-defeating but necessary silliness of the counter-propaganda on the behalf of the "I'm-all-right, Jack" myth, the issues themselves would not have been diffused, and we would never have passed from ethical to aesthetic judgment among key target groups of actors. Unfortunately, we do not know the extent of the diffusion. We do not know how many key actors in how many different types of institutions are wearing the suit. But we do know that <u>one</u> report, standing alone, could <u>not</u> have brought us this far. The response to one report can evidence the paradigm of rhetorical drama, but without three

reports, there would have been no propaganda--that special form of rhetoric whose aim is participation.

TIME, CHANGE AND ACTION: IS THERE AN ACT V?

I said there was an Act V. That is part of the mythology of higher education, you see. Wearing the suit of the reports is insufficient. Aesthetic judgments are self-contained. Participation must lead to action, and action to change. That sequence lies at the core of our belief system, and in it we do not differ from the ancients for whom, as Ernst Cassirer observed,

> only when the world. . .becomes a world not of mere being but of action, can we distinguish individual, independent figures in it. . the specific character of change, of acting and being acted upon . . .creates a basis for delimitation and definition. (45)

Time plays a far more significant role in our belief system than we recognize; and I contend that whether or not we experience an Act V to our drama depends on how we think about time and change.

I suggested at the outset that perhaps we have been thinking about change in superficial ways, and opposed "action" or "participation" (active or passive) to "change." Our mythology of change borrows heavily from the literature of organizational theory and innovation; and in that literature, time is treated principally in economic terms: as a resource to be allocated and/or used. But there is a deeper, philosophical treatment of time that can help us understand the "way of life" and expectations that our language has created, and hence provide better guidelines for the future.

The responses we have been examining often employ the qualifying language of time: "always," "sometimes," "unalterable," "stage," "phase," "renewal," etc. The language is one of sooner and later, before and after, a language implying that because what we do is serial, there is change--and change means that something is different now from the way it was before. The responses thus too often commit the classic fallacy of post hoc ergo propter hoc. But the very structure I have used to analyze the responses to the reports also contains a bias for change. It assumes, through what are ultimately arbitrary divisions of time, that conditions are serial, and that the possibilities for action do not occur until there has been a modulation of language, and a rise of first, ethical, and then, aesthetic judgment. "Modulation" and "rise" themselves imply an earlier and a later.

But time does not necessarily mean change; and change may not be the most accurate or proper end in our belief system. We are no longer the ancients Cassier described, living by a concept of mythical time that derives from an idea of division inherent in space. "The ultimate entity" in the "four-dimensional geometry" of the universe as we now understand it, George Herbert Mead wrote 50 years ago, "is . . . not a point but an event." (46) And because of the way we perceive them, events do not necessarily imply change.

Consider Mead's wise illustration. A train passes by a station platform. "To the man on the station platform and to the man in the train there is the same level of events at this ideal moment, but to each observer the events on this level are succeeded by different

events, to the one by the flying windows of the cars and to the other by the flying telegraphs [sic] poles." And "within the train there is a persistent here and there organization, while the events of the landscape have continuously different positions with reference to this consentient set of the interior of the train." (47) The different sets of participants in our drama act and observe in different time systems. To one set of participants, the reports pass; to another, they change; and to still another, they remain constant. As Mead points out, there is a difference between something passing and something changing. Neither the platform nor the train changes; rather, they pass. Change occurs only when the mind intervenes in the perception. "Change involves a departure from a condition," Mead wrote (48), and that happens only on active intervention that identifies a reference point in another event.

By one argument, we have achieved change if the same parties who issued negations and denials on the appearance of the reports are now wearing the suits. In other words, there would be evidence that the mind has intervened in the perception in different ways at two different points in time. Though we do not have this evidence, our traditional faith wishes that it were so. Otherwise, the reports and the key actors have simply passed.

But another argument is more optimistic; and it turns our traditional faith around. If we accept the goals of diffusion inherent in the dissemination of these reports, and if we respect both the present circumstances and future freedom of the actors, we can argue

that as long as the mind has moved from a state of passivity to at least one intervention in support of the "mythology" advanced by the reports, both the reports and the drama of propaganda have been successful. Change involves "a departure from a condition," and participation is just such a departure. It is a "witnessing" of the myth through ethical and aesthetic judgments, both of which, by their very utterance in our ordinary language use, reference other "events" or "states." When we "perform" in such a manner, we symbolically establish a favorable disposition to act on particulars or to support the actions of others, and thus expand the community of potential actors. By sustaining the drama of propaganda, we will widen the circle of witnesses, and that, I contend, is sufficient: Act V will thus take its course. Our good Bishop Andrewes well understood the potential power of this symbolic action when he observed of the circumstances of the Pax Vobis:

> This to all; the more, the more witnesses, the better for faith. Those when they were scattered; this here when they were all together. The more together, the more meet for this salutation. .

Our faith in the myth of change may be more secular, but our words of witnessing are just as public--and powerful.

NOTES

1. (page 1) The text, as Andrewes would have known it:

   > Com ergo sero esset die illo, una sabbatorum, et feres essent clausae, ubi erant Discipuli congregati propter metun Judaeorum, venit Jesus, et stetit in medio, et dixit eis, Pax Vobis.

2. (page 1) The Works of Lancelot Andrewes, Sometime Bishop of Winchester. 11 volumes, Oxford: John Henry Palmer, 1854. Vol. II, p. 240.

3. (page 2) Ludwig Wittgenstein eloquently posited that "eine Sprache vorstellen hei t, sich eine Lebensform vorstellen," i.e. to imagine a language is to imagine a way of life. In that maxim lies the fundamental intellectual attitude that informs this study. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations. New York: Macmillan, 1953, p. 8e.

4. (page 3) Kenneth Burke. The Philosophy of Literary Form. New York: Random House, 1957, p.22.

5. (page 4) Harold Lasswell and Associates, Language of Politics: Studies in Quantitative Semantics. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1968, p. 4.

6. (page 4) Lasswell, p. 8.

7. (page 4) The associates included Irving Janis and Ithiel De Sola Pool

8. (page 5) Charles Morris. Foundation of the Theory of Signs. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1938, p. 8.

9. (page 5) This argument is convincingly advanced by J. L. Austin, "Performative-Constative," in Caton, C. E. (ed.), Philosophy and Ordinary Language. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1963, pp. 22-53.

10. (page 5) Morris, p. 30.

11. (page 5) Morris, p. 38.

12. (page 6) I. A. Richards. The Philosophy of Rhetoric. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965, p. 24.

13. (page 6) Burke, p. 16.

14. (page 7) Jacques Ellul. Propaganda. New York: Random House, 1965, p. 15.

15. (page 7) Lasswell calls this "white propaganda."

16. (page 8) In the French original, Ellul's title is in the plural, Propagandes.

17. (page 8) Ellul, p. 25.

18. (page 8) Ellul, p. 26.

19. (page 9) Ellul, p. 113.

20. (page 10) Ellul, p. 31.

21. (page 11) Lasswell's colleague, Irving Janis, described content analysis as "referring to any technique a) for the classification of the sign-vehicles b) which relies solely upon the judgments (which, theoretically, may range from perceptual discrimination to sheer guesses) of an analyst or group of analysts as to which sign-vehicles fall into which categories, c) on the basis of explicitly formulated rules, d) provided that the analysts' judgments are regarded as the reports of a scientific observer."--- Janis, Irving L., "Meaning and the Study of Symbolic Behavior," Psychiatry, vol. 6 (1943), pp. 425-439.

22. (page 12) Lasswell, p. 55.

23. (page 13) Janis, in Lasswell (p. 57) first divides the field by three semiotic tasks: (1) "Pragmatical Content Analysis," which deals with the "probable causes or effects" of signs; (2) "Semantical Content Analysis," which deals with meaning; and (3) "Sign-vehicle Analysis," which classifies "content according to the psychophysical properties of the signs," i.e. counts discrete words. All of my procedures fall under the second of these general tasks, namely, those dealing with meaning.

24. (page 13) Janis, in Lasswell, p. 57.

25. (page 13) Janis, loc. cit.

26. (page 14) Lasswell, p. 67.

27. (page 16) Herbert Read. English Prose Style. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, p. 15.

28. (page 18) There were four major collections of communications, totalling over 1200 artifacts. The first was maintained by Courtesy Associates under a contract to the National Institute of Education for a period of 90 days commencing October 19, 1984. The second was a collection of clippings maintained by the Public Affairs Office of the National Endowment for the Humanities, covering a period

beginning Nov. 25, 1984 and concluding in March of 1985. The third was a collection of clippings collected under contract to the Association of American Colleges, commenting in January, 1985 and running through May. The last was an informal collection, maintained by the author, from October, 1984 through June, 1985. This latter collection also covered approximately 20 items concerning his study, "The Standardized Test Scores of College Graduates, 1964-1982," which was released in January, 1985. None of these items was included in the content analysis unless it specifically mentioned one or more of the three major reports.

29. (page 27) Lasswell, p. 35. Note that the more diffuse pattern of assertions in Period 1 does not create security of interpretation. The repetition and concentration of Period 3, however, does provide security.

30. (page 31) Charles Stevenson. Ethics and Language. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, pp. 64-65.

31. (page 31) Austin, J. L., "A Plea for Excuses," in Vincent Chappell (ed.), Ordinary Language. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964, p. 42.

32. (page 32) Austin, in Caton, observes that "we can't . . . expect any purely verbal criterion of the performative," (p. 26) and admits that even "constative" statements, such as those presented by logicians, can be performances. The key difference between the two types of speech-acts, evidently, is that a performance is susceptible to judgment, but not to verifiability.

33. (page 34) The "Commission on Higher Education Issues" of the American Council on Education, met a number of times in 1981-1982, and produced one of the least noted and swiftly forgotten reports of this period of reform, To Strengthen Quality in Higher Education.

34. (page 35) Few reporters understood just how To Reclaim a Legacy was written. An attribution such as "prepared by a group of distinguished academics and written by William J. Bennett," is typical. Others included, "The result of the work of 31 distinguished . . .etc.," "Is the work of 31 . . . etc.," and "Drafted with the advice of prominent scholars and college leaders." Of the articles I examined, only the campus newspaper at Texas A&M got it right, and the chairman of the Aggie English Department, Dave Stewart, was on Bennett's Study Group.

35. (page 38) The metaphor was first suggested by former Secretary Bell. In presenting Involvement in Learning at a press conference, he said our colleges "had a case of the sniffles." After this utterance, we were treated to everything from pneumonia to herpes.

36. (page 40) Orwell, G., "Looking Back on the Spanish War," in A Collection of Essays. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954, p. 202.

37. (page 41) Austin, in Chappell, p. 50.

38. (page 41) Austin, loc. cit., p. 53.

39. (page 42) For a discussion of the data and refutation of the excuse, see Clifford Adelman, The Standardized Test Scores of College Graduates, 1964-1982. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1985.

40. (page 48) See, e.g. Kriegel, L., "Who Cares About the Humanities?" The Nation, Dec. 29, 1984, pp. 713-715.

41. (page 51) Ludwig Wittgenstein. Lectures and Conversations (ed. Cyril Barrett). Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1967, p. 5.

42. (page 51) Wittgenstein, loc. cit., p. 7.

43. (page 52) Kant said that beauty exists in a relationship of the mind to the subject, not the object: "Demnoch haben wir zwei Volkommenheiten: eine logische und eine aesthetische. Bei die ersten stimmt meine Erkentiss mit dem Objekte, bei die andern mit dem Subjekte uberein. . . ." Otto Schlapp, Kants Lehre vom Genie und die Entstehung der 'Kritik der Urteilskraft'. Gottingen, 1901, p. 162. This is a collection of notes from Kant's lectures on metaphysics in 1779-1780, in which Kant goes on to say that objects are thus beautiful or ugly not in and for themselves, rather in relation to--and known in the expression of--a living being.

44. (page 53) Kenneth Burke. A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962, p. 547.

45. (page 54) Ernst Cassirer. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, Vol. II, p. 105.

46. (page 55) George Herbert Mead. The Philosophy of the Act. Edited with an Introduction by Charles W. Morris. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1938, p. 321.

47. (page 56) Mead, pp. 322-323.

48. (page 56) Mead, p. 331.

APPENDIX A:
Sources of Communications/Artifacts

Period 1: October 19 - Nov. 26, 1984 (38 days): Involvement in Learning
Period 2: Nov. 27, 1984 - Feb. 10, 1985 (75 days): To Reclaim a Legacy
Period 3: Feb. 10 - March 31, 1985 (48 days): Integrity in the College Curriculum
Period 4: April 1 - May 31, 1985 (61 days): Reprise (all three reports)

Number and Percentage of Total in Each Period

Period:	1*	2	3	4#	TOTAL
SOURCE:					
News Articles	20 (33.3%)	19 (14.2%)	37 (20.2%)	6 (22.2%)	82 (20.3%)
Wire Service Stories	5 (8.3)	3 (2.3)	12 (6.6)	0 (0.0)	20 (5.0)
Oth. Syndicated News/Features	2 (3.3)	3 (2.3)	7 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	12 (3.0)
Feature Articles/Reviews	10 (16.6)	12 (9.0)	11 (6.0)	5 (18.5)	38 (9.4)
College Paper: News/Editorial	2 (3.3)	17 (12.8)	26 (14.2)	5 (18.5)	50 (12.4)
Editorials	5 (8.3)	38 (28.6)	70 (38.3)	0 (0.0)	113 (28.0)
Syndicated Editorials	0 (0.0)	5 (3.8)	6 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	11 (2.7)
Columns	2 (2.3)	13 (9.8)	7 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	22 (5.5)
Guest Edits./Op-Ed	3 (5.0)	6 (4.5)	3 (1.6)	4 (14.8)	16 (4.0)
Letters to Editor	6 (10.0)	14 (10.5)	3 (1.6)	2 (7.4)	25 (6.2)
Assoc. & Trade Publications	5 (8.3)	3 (2.3)	1 (0.5)	5 (18.5)	14 (3.5)
TOTAL SOURCES:	60	133	183	27	403 (100%)
# of days in period	38	75	48	61	222
Ave. # Communications/Day	1.6	1.8	3.8	0.4	1.8

* NIE clipping service contract was limited to major media markets, no repetitions of wire service, syndicated column or other syndicated news, features, or editorials.

Communications received for this period were unsolicited.

APPENDIX B:

Designations Analysis

	Percentage of Total Assertions			
Period:	1	2	3	4
Designation				
Faculty	12.3%	14.5%	16.6%	17.4%
Students	10.4	14.5	14.8	14.0
Administrators	6.1	9.2	3.9	5.8
Trustees	3.7	2.1	2.1	2.3
Parents	1.2	2.1	2.7	0.0
Legislators	3.7	2.1	2.1	7.0
Accreditation Agencies	3.7	0.7	0.9	2.3
Departments	1.2	3.9	1.8	9.3
Graduate Education/Schools	2.5	2.1	4.5	5.8
Advisement, Counseling	3.1	0.7	0.9	1.1
Curriculum	10.4	10.2	11.3	8.1
Admissions/Access	5.5	2.5	3.3	2.3
Graduation Standards	8.6	1.8	4.5	9.3
Higher Education in General	19.0	12.7	9.8	9.3
Location Institution/System	8.6	20.8	21.1	5.8
TOTALS:	100.0%	99.9%	100.3%	99.8%
Total Assertions, 15 designations	168	283	337	86
Total Communications/Artifacts	60	133	183	27
Ave. # Assertions/Artifact	2.8	2.1	1.9	3.2

APPENDIX C:

Gross Assertions Analysis: 14 Designations*

	Percentage of Total Assertions			
Period:	1	2	3	4
Assertion Categories:				
1. Unqualified Positive	9.0%	2.7%	5.6%	7.4%
2. Qualified Positive	11.0	7.1	11.3	9.9
3. Qualified Negative	20.1	21.9	25.9	13.6
4. Unqualified Negative	20.1	41.1	38.7	22.2
5. Balanced	13.6	6.7	9.8	18.5
6. No Direction/Neutral	26.0	20.5	8.6	28.4
TOTALS:	99.8%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%
Total Assertions, 14 designations	154	224	266	81
Total Communications/Artifacts	60	133	183	27
Ave. # Assertions/Artifact	2.6	1.7	1.5	3.0

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* For this table, the 15th designation, "Local Institution/System was dropped from the data analysis because the responses in that category were heavily biased, to wit:

Assertion Category				
1.	28.6%	37.3%	57.7%	#
2.	35.7	30.5	22.5	#
3.	0.0	18.6	8.5	#
4.	0.0	6.8	4.2	#
5.	7.1	6.8	5.6	#
6.	28.6	0.0	1.4	#

Insufficient number of designations.

See discussion of this phenomenon in the text, pp. 22-24.

understanding as the isolated designations and assertions we have been examining through content analysis. With the entrance of "intention," our focus shifts to the relationship between writer and audience, hence, to rhetoric. Rhetoric asks us to pay close attention to what Austin called the "performative utterance." (32) In the context of propaganda, where mythologies may be competing, the interplays among these utterances constitute symbolic arguments. Their evolution in time is like a drama, complete with acts and scenes, context and costume, and to them we now turn.

THE RHETORIC OF DRAMA: THE DRAMA OF RHETORIC

For purposes of the quantitative analysis of communications, we set some arbitrary time periods determined by the release dates of the three reports under consideration. When one examines the drama of rhetoric, however, it appears that the responses to each report go through the same set of Acts and Scenes until a period of reflection sets in, or at least until negative commentary has been exhausted. In the following account of this sequence, I use the case I know best for illustrative purposes, namely that of Involvement in Learning, though I will also draw on the experience of the other two reports.

I propose that we witness a drama in five acts (this is a comedy, after all). Provided that the propaganda we witnessed in the media is sustained, the sequence of these acts is inevitable:

APPENDIX D:
Content Analysis Guidelines

A. Communications Excluded Altogether

1. Any text that merely presents, summarizes or strings together quotations from any of the reports.
2. Short (one paragraph/50 words) letters-to-the-editor.
3. Articles from newspapers or magazines published outside the U.S.
4. Press releases.
5. Communications that are not in the public domain. While we possess many of these, while some of them are remarkable documents, and while many were shared with important groups, they were never reported or published in media that would reach a broad constituency in higher education. Examples include reports by state chancellors to their trustees, analyses of one or more of the reports written by groups of students as part of their course-work, and the texts of nearly 200 formal statements made at the three Regional Conferences on Quality in Higher Education sponsored by NIE and at the various sessions of the 1985 conventions of the AAHE and the AAC.

B. Communications Included Only Once Despite Multiple Appearances

1. Wire Service stories, even where wording or paragraph order has been altered (but see E below). The original wire is included.
2. Syndicated editorials. The first appearance only is analyzed (however, see E below).
3. Syndicated columns and features.

C. Range of Text and Specified Context

The basic "range of text" within which a designation will be tabulated once even if it occurs more than once is the paragraph. The "specified context" within which the judgment of the direction of assertions will be applied is the entire communication or artifact. This basic rule is modified by D and E.

D. Assertions Excluded

1. Statements about their own reports made by members of the study groups or panels responsible for writing them.
2. Statements by or about William J. Bennett in which Student Financial Aid or Department of Education policy issues are raised.
3. Assertions of the same category (e.g. qualified negative) made twice or more about the same designation in the same article. In these cases, the assertion is counted only once. If the assertions are in different categories, they are counted individually.

E. Special Inclusion of Communications and Assertions

Where individual newspapers add to basic wire service stories or syndicated editorials, e.g. with a quote from a local college official or with a comment on the situation on area campuses. In these cases, only that portion of the story or article in addendum is subject to assertions and designations analysis.

APPENDIX E

Raw Data on Assertions for 15 Designations, by Time Period

1. FACULTY (other terms: teaching, instruction, academics, professors)

Assertion Category	Period: 1	2	3	4
1	2	3	3	1
2	2	2	9	3
3	6	6	15	2
4	3	18	15	2
5	2	2	10	5
6	5	10	4	2

2. STUDENTS (other terms: graduates)

1	3	2	4	0
2	2	5	8	1
3	2	11	11	1
4	3	15	21	2
5	5	2	5	3
6	7	6	1	5

3. ADMINISTRATORS (other terms: college officials, deans, presidents, academic managers, academic leaders)

1	3	0	0	1
2	0	2	0	1
3	2	5	4	1
4	0	13	7	0
5	3	0	0	0
6	2	6	2	2

4. TRUSTEES (other terms: board members, boards, regents)

1	0	0	1	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	1	1	1	0
4	1	1	1	0
5	0	0	1	0
6	4	4	3	2

5. PARENTS

1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	1	0
3	0	1	2	0
4	0	2	2	0
5	1	0	2	0
6	1	3	2	0

APPENDIX E-1

6. LEGISLATORS (state)

Assertion Category	Period: 1	2	3	4
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	1
3	1	2	1	1
4	2	2	1	0
5	1	0	2	1
6	2	2	3	3

7. ACCREDITING AGENCIES (other terms: accreditation, accreditation standards/requirements)

1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	1	0	0	1
4	3	2	3	1
5	0	0	0	0
6	2	0	0	0

8. DEPARTMENTS

1	0	1	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	1	1	4	2
4	1	6	2	3
5	0	0	0	1
6	0	3	0	2

9. GRADUATE EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

1	0	0	2	1
2	0	1	4	0
3	1	2	2	1
4	1	2	5	2
5	0	0	0	1
6	2	1	2	0

10. ADVISEMENT/COUNSELING

1	1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	1	1	1	0
4	1	0	2	0
5	0	0	0	0
6	2	1	0	1

APPENDIX E-2

11. CURRICULUM (other terms: course of study, studies, subjects, content, substance)

Assertion Category	Period: 1	2	3	4
1	0	0	2	0
2	1	1	4	0
3	4	9	11	0
4	5	14	16	4
5	3	2	1	2
6	4	3	4	1

12. STANDARDS: ADMISSIONS

1	0	0	0	0
2	1	0	0	0
3	1	2	3	0
4	1	1	6	1
5	4	2	2	0
6	2	2	0	1

13. STANDARDS: EXIT AND PROGRESSION

1	1	0	1	0
2	0	3	0	0
3	3	0	5	1
4	6	2	9	3
5	1	0	0	1
6	3	0	0	3

14. HIGHER EDUCATION IN GENERAL

1	3	0	2	3
2	10	2	4	2
3	7	8	9	1
4	4	14	13	0
5	1	7	2	1
6	6	5	2	1

15. LOCAL INSTITUTION/SYSTEM

1	4	22	41	2
2	5	18	16	1
3	0	11	6	0
4	0	4	3	0
5	1	4	4	1
6	4	0	1	1

APPENDIX E-3

15. LOCAL INSTITUTION/SYSTEM: Sub-Categories of Responses, by Period

Period:	1	2	3	4
(a) "We're Already Doing It": Curriculum				
Prior to 1985	2	7	15	1
In 1985	1	2	6	0
In 1986	1	0	7	0
Later	0	1	3	0
Always	0	2	10	0
Studying Reform	3	10	9	2
(b) "We're Not Doing It"	0	8	0	0
(c) "We Know It Doesn't Work"	6	2	2	1
(d) "We're Already Doing It": Assessment				
Prior to 1985	2	0*	2	0
In 1985	1	0*	2	0
In 1986	2	0*	1	0
Later	1	0*	0	1
(e) "It's All the Fault of the 60s and 70s"	2	22	19	1

*Not an issue in the NEH report.